

Short Stories

Asian Elephants



Common name: Asian elephant

Latin name: *Elephas maximus*

Distribution: Asian elephants have a wide range. You can find them in India (which is why they used to be called Indian elephants), Sri Lanka and further south and east as far as Sumatra.

Habitat: They're well suited to monsoon territory. They like living on the edge of forests but can cope with most habitats, as long as they can find enough to eat and drink.

Appearance: Asian elephants aren't quite as big as African elephants but they're still huge and can weigh as much as five cars. They have thick, dry skin that varies in colour from brown to grey. They flap their ears in the breeze to keep cool.

Food: Elephants are vegetarians. They prefer grasses, but can also eat bark, roots, leaves and the stems of trees, vines and shrubs. A single elephant needs, on average, about 150 kilograms of food each day. No wonder they spend most of their time eating!

Breeding: Female Asian elephants (cows) usually have just one baby (calf). Baby elephants weigh about 100 kilograms and can stand soon after birth. Elephants are very sociable animals and form close family groups around one elder female.

Special skills: An elephant's trunk isn't just a long nose. It's a power shower, siphon and snorkel too. It ends in an extremely sensitive finger-like point which helps them to pick up food and use tools.

Did you know? At full charge, an elephant can run at nearly 50 kilometres an hour! For more informations go to: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/nature/reallywild/wildlife>

● Read the text and answer the questions:

1. Where can you find th Asian elephant?

2. Where do the like living?

3. Are the Asian elephants bigger than the African ones?

4. What do the Asian elephant eat?

5. How do you call a female elephant? And a baby elephant? Can you guess what's the name for a male elephant?